ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE _A-8_

NEW YORK TIMES
18 MARCH 1982

U.S. Prepares Report on Chemical Warfare Deaths

By BERNARD GWERTZMAN
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 17 — The Reagan Administration will make public a newly declassified intelligence report on Monday that it says shows Soviet involvement in the deaths of more than 6,000 Laotians, 1,000 Cambodians and 3,000 Afghans through the use of a variety of chemical warfare agents, Administration officials said today.

The Administration has already accused Moscow of using lethal and incapacitating agents in Afghanistan and of supplying chemical warfare agents for use in Laos and in Cambodia. A group of United Nations experts said last fall that it could neither verify nor refute the charges. Some members of Congress have pressed the Administration to make more of its findings public to end lingering doubts.

To bolster the Administration's case, according to officials, an interagency committee involving the Central Intelligence Agency, the State Department and the Defense Department, has declassified much of the material that has accumulated between 1975 and a month ago and written a report that is more than 100 pages long.

According to one participant in the drafting, "We are as specific and complete as we can be." He said, "I don't think anything will end the doubts completely, but it will go a long way to answering a lot of questions."

"I was a doubter myself when we started, but I'm persuaded," he said, speaking of the use of chemical agents and of the Soviet role.

In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last week, Deputy Secretary of State Walter J. Stoessel Jr. said that "as a result of chemical attacks, 3,042 deaths attributed to 47 separate incidents between the summer of 1979 and the summer of 1981 have been reported."

The report will list the 47 incidents in tabular form, an official said. Of the more than 3,000 people killed, he said, about 2,000 were in one Soviet attack. The report will also list the incidents that are believed to have resulted in the Laotian and Cambodian deaths.

On the accuracy of the numbers, the official said intelligence officials had tried to be as careful as possible in assessing the thousands of individual reports. He said much of the material was questioned and discarded. The number of fatalities, he said, was "probably lower than the real number and has an artificial precision."

The report is said to lack any physical evidence that agents were used in Afghanistan, officials said. Rather, officials said, reports of Afghan military defectors, some of whom said they were involved in chemical warfare, were correlated with reports of Afghan refugees in Pakistan who said they witnessed Soviet attacks. Then, one official said, "we check our records as to what the Soviet military was up to on that day, and if it checks out, we include it in the report."

Meanwhile, Dean Fischer, the State Department spokesman, said today that Ambassador Anatoly F. Dobrynin of the Soviet Union called on Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig Jr. on Tuesday. He would not disclose what was discussed, but it presumably included Leonid I. Brezhnev's speech announcing the Soviet freeze on deployment of new intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe for as long as the Western allies do not deploy Pershing 2 and cruise missiles.

In the speech, Mr. Brezhnev also warned that deployment if the 572 new NATO missiles "would compel us to take retaliatory steps that would put the other side, including the United States itself, its own territory, in an analogous position."

A senior Administration official said the Soviet Union had not told Washington what kind of retaliation it was thinking about. There has been speculation that Moscow wanted the United States to become concerned about intermediate range missiles being placed in Cuba or on submarines near the American coast.

President Reagan, when asked, said today: "I would not want to place any interpretation on this. I'm studying it right now."